

A Trip Over The Llano

By R. K. Williams

AN idea was just handed to me to hang this month's ranch story on. It was suggested that we describe the ranch activities by taking you with us over the place, on what is known as the loop route. Suppose we load up the auto with an interested crowd of people and start from the hotel after breakfast.

We are on our way and, whirling through the big gate, we turn to the left and pass with a whiz by the industrial building, and on the right lie 65 acres of alfalfa. Immediately a cool breeze strikes us, and the eye is rested with the undulating motion of green. To the left is part of Llano town, built since last August. A year ago the place where now stand dozens of tents, substantial adobe structures and pretty wooden houses, was a corn field. This is pointed out and explained to show how time and labor has wrought changes, and it always proves of interest.

The nursery to the left next comes in view, and the auto is slowed down a bit while the varieties of berries, trees, grapes and other things being experimented with and grown by horticulturist Dawson are shown and explained. Beyond the nursery can be seen 35 acres of newly planted pears, and between the symmetrical green rows straight furrows of beans, waving in the morning air, give a pleasing tone to the scene. To the north just a little way from the orchard are ten acres of green Soudan grass which is growing finely. This will be used for ensilage and help as a soil builder. Further to the north the fine 4-year old pear orchard, containing 40 acres, always elicits pleased expressions and it is explained that it was not allowed to bear this year but that next year a considerable crop will be grown.

We now cross a little bridge over the rapid stream

rushing to the north. The big 150 by 40 feet cow barn stands right in the road apparently. By its side looms up the 300 ton silo. In front of the silo the auto halts and we all get out and go into the cool barn and look at the neat arrangement for the care of the dairy herd. Contented cows to the number of 65 or 70 at the present time milking, having their heads through stanchions, eating with much relish the alfalfa from the mangers. The place is shadowy and cool.

Back of the barn is a concrete tank to hold the refuse, which is carted to the fields to enrich the ground. A round concrete drinking fountain constantly full of fresh running water awaits the thirsty animal. The cattle may drink around the circle and never touch horns with opposite neighbors. The circular drinking fountain is a success.

The silo, made of 8-inch cement blocks, is banded together by strong iron bands which prevent swelling or bursting of the sides from the tremendous pressure wrought when the ensilage is fermenting within. It is explained that crops are now being grown with which to fill for winter feed. The safest and best feed known made in the silo.

Visitors always remark on the number of fly traps about the ranch. These are placed about the barn and elsewhere.

Now we will cross over to the pig pens. There is nothing particularly romantic about this part of the ranch, nor have the pork family palatial houses; visitors are chiefly interested in the swine themselves. Above the feeding place are several fields of alfalfa, and it is a pretty sight to see the rounded backs and broad shoulders of several hundred hogs as they graze in the succulent feed.

Veterinary Dr. Capron and John Will will explain the difference between the Duroc-Jersey and the Berkshire and the



Partly Cleared Llano Lands—Site for New City

Poland China, and expatiate at considerable length on hog raising much to the edification and enjoyment of those in the party. Very frequently we have hog raisers with us, and they of course, are intensely interested and from them Dr. Capron and Mr. Will have received many suggestions and told of interesting experiments. The hog family is constantly growing, and it is the aim of those in charge of this department to keep it up to standard, increasing it with the finest stock.

Now we will go back to the auto and whirl over to Manager Kilmer's rabbit department. People generally, and especially the children, like to see the cunning little rabbits. There seems to be an irresistible desire on the part of most people to stick their fingers into the tender sides or tickle the pink noses of the baby rabbits.

In the hutches are to be found mothers with litters of young to the number of several hundred. In the rest houses constructed of adobe, rabbits, seemingly in myriads, lie on the floor resting and breathing as fast as their little ribs will let them. At the present time in the hutches, runs and adobe houses are more than two thousand rabbits. Manager Kilmer will increase the number of hutches, increase the number of does to probably 800 or 1000 and from this increased number expects confidently to get a supply of rabbits that will go a long way toward solving the meat problem of the Colony.

In addition to the meat supply furnished by the rabbits, the hides are taken and tanned and then made into several useful articles. The rug department has made several styles of rabbit rugs and automobile robes. It is said by those who understand this sort of work that the usefulness of the rabbit hide is extensive. They can be used for hats, caps, gloves, trimmings, leggings, robes, rugs, etc. When tanned to softness the fur is delightful to handle.

The chicken department is next on the route. However, at present time the odd 900 chickens are being moved to a new location in the pear orchard east of the town. Nevertheless, we will go through the houses and have a look at the up-to-date arrangement for the care of chickens. There are two houses with a connecting cover between them. Each house is 60 feet long divided in ten-foot sections and a long window runs the full length of the house on the eastern exposure. The roosts being on the western side are protected from northeast winds by the partitions. A row of nests along the front of the house are so arranged that the five feet sections can be taken down and readily cleaned.

In the center of the house is an alcove in which are three fountains constantly dripping. Dozens of chickens crowd this place to keep cool and quench their thirst. Two small doors permit of egress and ingress through the alcove. The feeding troughs are fastened to the partitions and filled with dry mash of an approved formula and fixed by two inch mesh wires which permit the heads of the chickens to go into the feed box. Waste is thus eliminated. The prison house for broody chickens is shown consisting of a wire cage with roosts. Broody hens are sentenced for 48 hours to water and green food, and at the end of that time the incubation heat of the breast has been reduced to normal, and they are released and soon go back to the sensible thing of laying eggs.

We will now drive three-quarters of a mile to the Goodwin ranch, where is located the Montessori school, the second free Montessori in the state and much the largest in the west. This school was established by Mrs. Prudence Stokes Brown, a pupil of the famous Dr. Montessori, now in Spain installing her system of child culture for a three-quarter million dollar fee. Between forty and sixty children, ranging from 2½ to 6 years attend this school daily, which is presided over by Mrs.



Montessori Tots Learn Housekeeping

Masteller, Mrs. Wilhide, Mrs. Buxton, Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Whitzel. Mrs. Brown is now on vacation in San Diego.

The children are carried to the schools in automobiles, and the morning and evening rides start and end the day for the little tots nicely.

It would take more space than this magazine has at its disposal to tell of the things the Montessori system does for the child. It is admittedly the best system of child culture known. They learn reading, writing, deportment, domestic arts: they learn to dress themselves and in fact learn by example to be perfect little ladies and gentlemen without being conscious of having been taught. They live the thing and learn by discovery. Opportunity is given for individual expression and it is astonishing to see how the children unfold and grow. Little ones of 4 and 5 are frequently more advanced in general practical knowledge of life than grade scholars in average schools. There is no doubt of the utility of the Montessori system and there is also no doubt that the present exponents now engaged in its teaching here are amply able to carry out the important work given to the educational world by Dr. Montessori.

We honestly consider that the facilities offered the children for growth and unfoldment should make it incumbent upon every mother and father to make every effort to place their children in such an environment where love, co-operation and mutual help are living, pulsing things.

The school is growing and from time to time additional space will have to be added.

Back of the Montessori school is the colony tomato patch. A ten or twelve acre space is filled with thriving tomatoes, and everything points to a supply that will more than carry the colony over the winter without importing a can. Several acres of sweet potatoes join the tomato patch to the north. Sweet potatoes grow wonderfully well in the soils at Llano.

Having been interested visitors to the school and looked over the green fields thereabouts, we will ride up a quarter of a mile and see what the children are doing at the Sierra Madre colony. This colony is under the management of George T. Pickett and Mrs. Pickett, and embraces the school proper of Llano. Here are worked out industrially the problems of life and when the child, above the age of six, is finished in this school he will be able to take his proper place in the world

without having to discard a lot of rubbish accumulated from misleading histories, text books, etc.

Feeling that the educational system generally is wrong and teaches things that work to the detriment of the human race, a new and better one has been adopted. The school room usually a prison house for young minds and bodies, will be used more for reference and reading rooms than aught else. The problems in calculation will be taught in the open by actual contact with concrete things. The problem of how much profit Smith makes from a cow will be eliminated.

It would take too long to explain how things are to be brought before the minds of the children, but suffice to say that music, art, literature, history, civics, surveying, language, domestic science, farm problems, cultivating, plowing, planting, irrigating, building, etc., will be taught naturally and by actual practice.

Here are some of the teachers engaged in the work of helping the children to expand: C. W. Hunton, J. J. Banbury, Miss Geister, Oliver Zornes, Wesley Zornes, Miss Gladys Zornes, Miss Miller, Mrs. Williams, Miss Austin, Mrs. George T. Pickett, Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Banbury. Mr. West in the masonry and construction department. Botany, biology elocution, modeling, etc., are among the things to be taught. More teachers will be added from time to time.

The children have plowed and planted and grown vegetables that supply their tables; they have constructed brooder houses, fences, ditches, etc., are taking care of goats, chickens, horses, rabbits, and other animals. They are planning, building and working hard to have here one of the greatest schools in the country, where the boy and girl can get a practical education that will be of real use and last as long as life.

It is hard to break away from the Sierra Madre colony for here is always so much to say and to see, for the citizen of the future can be pictured here. However, we will get into the car and take you on over the loop.

To the right is the old Tighman place, now the property of the colony, which soon will be headquarters for many men who work on the eighty-acre garden close by. It is a nice place, and the gardens under Knobbs, Newman and others show up nicely and never fail to receive the approval of the visitor.

Turning to the left after crossing the Tighman ditch, we go to the sawmill, which is almost ready to cut the huge logs for the future needs of Llano. The mill has a 30,000 feet capacity and can be gotten ready to saw within a few days.

We retrace our steps and come back to the townsite where twenty foundations have been dug and some filled with stone ready for houses. The townsite is a mile square and the city is to be circular with six great avenues leading to the center where will be the great buildings contributing to the business and social life of the future city. It takes an architect to explain the beauties of the architecture and draw the proper sort of picture, but the view to be had from the townsite is inspiring. The great Antelope valley lies like a wavering checker board at your feet, and in the distant haze the Tehachapi mountains hang like clouds. Miss Austin, the designer and Mr. Angell, the architect, are busy at work now working out the elevations, etc.

Turning to the left at the center of the townsite we continue onward to the lime kiln in Bob's Gap, two miles beyond, and at an elevation of considerably more than 3,700 feet. A great ledge of lime rock extends to unknown depth and for miles to the east and west. There is a lime kiln there and when running full blast, thirty or more barrels can be turned out daily. Experts say the lime is the best that can be procured. A

granite house affords a place of refuge from the weather and the force there are accommodated with meals and otherwise made comfortable by J. J. Leslie. The lime production is now under the charge of Mr. Stevens.

Leading to the left from the kiln is the log road to Jackson's Lake where the timber is to be procured. However, we will take the right road and continue on. Through rugged scenery we rise to an elevation of nearly 5000 feet and look off in the distance to the west and see the basin of the Big Rock, where the colony intends impounding a tremendous quantity of water. Lying on the hillside is the beautiful Valyermo ranch, where the finest fruit in the valley is grown. To the left lies the Shoemaker ranch, surrounded by trees and green alfalfa fields. Descending the winding hill we cross the Big Rock Creek rushing madly down toward the colony and after crossing its limpid waters we enter a delightfully cool nook and travel for quite a distance in the delicious shade of the trees.

The next point of interest is the dam site proper. We stop here and ascend the cut where the dam is to be made. After a strenuous climb of 300 feet and after regaining our breath, we point out the Big Rock, a bald monument of solid stone with a hole in the center, called the Devil's Punch Bowl. Lying below is the actual basin of the Big Rock. By damming up the narrow neck, less than 300 feet across to a height of 110 feet, thousands of acre feet of water can be conserved. A magnificent view can be had from this elevation. There is no trouble in convincing the most skeptical of the water possibilities of Llano when the dam site is shown and the rushing creek below is seen.

The portal of the tunnel is now visited on the way back to the colony. Here the water, never changing winter and summer, rushes out of a tunnel three-quarters of a mile in length. This work was done years ago by early settlers for the purpose, it is said, of reaching bedrock and thus conserving the known supply that lies on it. It was never commercially utilized, and is now one of the possessions of the colony. This is ideal water for domestic purposes and will be used for that. At present it is mixing with the regular stream of the Big Rock and comes to the colony in ditches. After taking a huge drink and filling our canteens we again get into the auto and cross over the rough, stony wash of the Big Rock, which in winter time is a raging torrent, and pass the upper intake and then begin to ascend a forty rod, winding hill road. At the top an inspiring panorama spreads before one like a great revolving cylinder. To the west, north and east, mile upon mile, and losing themselves in dissolving distances, glimmer mountains, fields, buttes and plains, while below the tented city of the Llano glimmers in the sunlight. Giving a push to the gas throttle we hurry over the hard roads back to the hotel, where dinner awaits, twenty-five miles left behind and a new impression created on the minds of the yearners after industrial freedom.

The Price Of The Western Comrade Will Be 50c a Year

Increase in prices of all materials used in getting out THE WESTERN COMRADE has made it necessary to discontinue the low clubbing rate of 25c a year. Henceforth, the subscription price will be 50c a year, no matter what the number of subscriptions sent in.

Those who have read the COMRADE during the last year know that it is easily worth a dollar a year, compared with other magazines. But because we now have our own printing plant equipped with the latest linotype machine made, and with a cylinder press that does fast work, the low price of 50c a year can be made.

The LLANO COLONIST will soon be in the mail, and every interested reader of the COMRADE will also want it. Those who renew now and subscribe for the COLONIST at the same time will receive both publications for 75c a year. The regular price of the COLONIST is 50c.